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SUBJECT: SEOUL - MEDIA REACTION

Subject: Media Reaction; Seoul

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC: DPRK

"China Weakens Impact of Pressure on N. Korea"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized (10/07): "North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's statement, 'North Korea is ready to hold multilateral talks and these talks include the Six-Party Talks,' suggests that North Korea, depending on circumstances, may push trilateral talks with the U.S. and China, instead of the Six-Party Talks. After all, Chinese Premier Wen's visit to Pyongyang resulted in massive economic aid to North Korea in return for the North's mere 'expression of willingness' to return to multilateral talks, instead of its clear promise to return to the Six-Party Talks. This situation amounts to China repeating the mistake of the past of rewarding North Korea before it has done anything, especially when UN sanctions are still in effect. This approach weakens international pressure on North Korea and the negotiating powers of the countries in the Six-Party Talks."

"No Point in Six-Party Talks If They Only Confirm What Is Discussed in U.S.-North Korea Bilateral Talks"

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo's editorialized (10/07): "... North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's (statement) reveals his belief that discussion on the nuclear issue should be between the U.S. and North Korea, and that the Six-Party Talks will confirm (whatever outcome results from those talks). The U.S. believes, however, that any discussions about the resolution of the nuclear issue must be within the framework of the Six-Party Talks and that U.S.-North Korea dialogue should serve as a stepping stone for the multilateral talks. A visit to Pyongyang by U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth is likely to be realized when this difference in position is narrowed to some degree. ... The two-track approach of 'pressure and dialogue' should be maintained until there is an assurance that North Korea's nuclear abandonment is irreversible."

"China's Failure to Do More"

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized (10/07): "It is highly likely that the North mentioned the Six-Party Talks as a face-saving

measure for China. China's (economic) assistance may also violate U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874 sanctioning North Korea. ... If Beijing promised assistance banned by the U.N. to maintain its influence over Pyongyang, it does not deserve a seat at the U.N. Security Council. Rather, this could further encourage North Korea to develop nuclear weapons, judging that international sanctions against it might no longer be as strict as they used to be."

"N. Korea Throws Ball for Six-Party Talks into Other Countries' Court"

Moderate Hankook ILbo editorialized (10/07): "The ball is now in other Six-Party countries' court. ... The U.S. is likely to take cautious steps to make sure that North Korea will return to the Six-Party Talks while the international community continues to cooperate to enforce sanctions against North Korea. The U.S., however, should not miss this rare opportunity by moving too slowly."

"Lee Administration Must Change Obsolete N. Korea Policy"

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized (10/07): "Broadly speaking, the significance of this North Korea-China meeting for the international community, including the ROK, is twofold. First, with China agreeing to large-scale economic aid to North Korea, sanctions against North Korea have been rendered virtually powerless. With China-which accounted for over 70 percent of North Korean trade last

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year -pledging large-scale economic cooperation, pressuring the North through sanctions is nothing more than a joke. The other point of significance is that the two nations have pledged to strengthen their friendship 'for generations to come.' This means China will support the North Korean regime in the long-term. One could say a honeymoon era has begun between North Korea and China. The Lee Myung-bak Administration is greatly at fault for the fact that the situation has reached this point, since it has thoroughly blocked exchanges and cooperation with North Korea."

STEPHENS